

FACTSHEET

Veterinary Services

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

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Pseudorabies

Q: What is pseudorabies?

A: Pseudorabies is a disease of swine that can also affect cattle, horses, dogs, cats, sheep, and goats. The disease is caused by pseudorabies virus (PRV), an extremely contagious herpesvirus that causes reproductive problems, including abortion, stillbirths, and even occasional death losses in breeding and finishing hogs.

Q: Is PRV contagious to humans?

A: No. The virus has never been shown to be contagious to humans, not even to people working on farms with many PRV-infected animals.

Q: How is the virus spread?

A: PRV is primarily spread through direct animal-to-animal (or nose-to-nose) contact between an infected and shedding pig and a noninfected pig. If present on inanimate objects, such as boots, clothing, feed, trucks, and equipment, the virus can also spread from herd to herd and farm to farm.

Q: How can pseudorabies be prevented?

A: Pseudorabies can be prevented primarily through good, tight biosecurity, a sound vaccination program, and thorough, meticulous management with disease control and prevention in mind.

Q: How long has the virus existed in the United States?

A: PRV is known to have existed in the United States for at least 150 years.

Q: What are the trade and economic implications of pseudorabies?

A: The United States is one of the world's largest producers of pork and is the second-largest exporter of pork. U.S. pork production accounts for about 10 percent of the total world supply. The retail value of pork sold to consumers exceeds \$30 billion annually. In addition, the pork industry supports more than 600,000 jobs.

The presence of pseudorabies in U.S. swine has a tremendous economic impact on the industry's yearly earnings. The cost to pork producers alone is over \$30 million annually. Of this amount, more than half, \$17 million, represents the cost of vaccination. Another \$11 million is attributable to pig deaths, with the remainder of the money spent on testing.

Q: What is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) pseudorabies eradication program?

A: USDA established a voluntary eradication program for pseudorabies in the United States in 1989. The program is cooperative in nature and involves Federal, State, and industry participation. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) coordinates the national pseudorabies eradication program, State governments promulgate and enforce the intrastate regulations, and producers contribute by having their herds tested and instituting control and eradication measures. The program's primary activities include surveillance, herd monitoring, and herd cleanup. On December 24, Secretary Glickman made an announcement accelerating this effort.

Q: How is this pseudorabies eradication program funded?

A: The eradication program was initially intended to be funded equally by Federal, State, and industry cooperators. However, over the last 9 years, the industry and affected States have funded the majority of the program.

Q: What is the Federal budget for pseudorabies eradication for fiscal year (FY) 1999?

A: APHIS' FY 1999 budget for pseudorabies is \$4.6 million for eradication efforts and \$4.5 million for surveillance and other activities.

Q: How many States are pseudorabies free?

A: Currently, there are 28 States and 2 territories free of this disease, and 7 States are in the qualifying stage for free status.

Q: How is a herd determined to be pseudorabies infected?

A: A pseudorabies-infected herd contains animals that have tested positive serologically or have had the virus isolated in an official test conducted by an approved laboratory.

Q: How many herds are still infected with the virus and in what States?

A: In 1992, there were nearly 8,000 pseudorabies-infected swine herds in the United States, and as of December 29, 1998, there were 1,110 infected herds left, consisting of 1.9 million swine. A breakout of these numbers follows:

Number of Swine and Herds Under Quarantine, by State		
States	Herds under quarantine	Number of swine
Iowa	600	510,000
Indiana	200	604,890
Minnesota	150	212,000
North Carolina	99	336,374
Nebraska	17	160,000
Florida	14	354
Illinois	13	7,335
Pennsylvania	6	6,817
Michigan	3	18,900
California	2	3,000
South Dakota	2	1,100
Texas	2	16
Massachusetts	1	1,000
Louisiana	1	8

Q: Why accelerate the pseudorabies eradication program now?

A: The progress of the eradication program has recently been threatened because depressed swine market prices have caused a number of producers to stop vaccinating their herds due to the added expense. Ceasing to vaccinate could seriously affect the current eradication program by allowing the virus to spread more rapidly from pseudorabies-infected herds to unvaccinated swine herds. A resurgence of pseudorabies in the United States could jeopardize the country's current position as the second-largest exporter of pork in the world.

Consequently, USDA is accelerating the pseudorabies eradication program by quickly removing the remaining infected swine from the population to prevent further spread of the virus. The accelerated program will also help hog farmers financially during a particularly difficult time.

Q: What is the timeline for the accelerated pseudorabies eradication program?

A: The current eradication program has reduced the number of pseudorabies-infected herds from 8,000 in 1992 to today's total of 1,110. APHIS anticipates that the accelerated pseudorabies eradication program will begin in January. By accelerating the eradication program, USDA will provide the opportunity to depopulate all known infected herds in the first half of 1999. USDA's overall goal is to have the eradication program completed in 2000.

Q: What are the goals or benefits of the accelerated pseudorabies eradication program?

A: The accelerated program will enable APHIS to buy herds with pseudorabies-infected swine at a fair market price and reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

Q: Where is APHIS getting the additional funds to conduct the accelerated pseudorabies program?

A: Secretary Glickman has signed a declaration of emergency, authorizing the transfer and use of \$80 million to conduct the accelerated pseudorabies eradication program.

Q: How will the additional funding be used?

A: The additional funds would be used to compensate producers and cover the cost of transportation, equipment, and disposal of carcasses.

Q: How will the hogs be disposed?

A: Because slaughter facilities are operating at maximum capacity, the animals will be rendered.

Q: How will APHIS determine compensation for depopulated swine?

A: Producers with known pseudorabies-infected herds will be compensated based on present fair market value. A producer can be compensated for a herd even if only one hog is found infected with pseudorabies.

Q: Under what guidelines will the accelerated eradication program be conducted and infected herds depopulated?

A: The accelerated pseudorabies eradication program will be conducted under guidelines established by APHIS' Veterinary Services staff with input from the pork industry. In conjunction with State veterinarians, APHIS and its Area Veterinarians-in-Charge will develop appropriate depopulation and disposal procedures, once the eradication process begins.

Q: Will participation in the accelerated pseudorabies eradication program be required?

A: No. Participation in the accelerated program is voluntary, and those producers with affected herds who choose not to participate must still adhere to established pseudorabies eradication standards.

Q: What about herds that are currently nearing completion of quarantine release under APHIS' existing mandatory quarantine and removal program?

A: Producers of herds that are nearing completion of quarantine release have the option of continuing the present removal and quarantine program or participating in the accelerated program.

Q: How soon after depopulation can producers repopulate their herds?

A: Producers can repopulate their herds 30 days after approved cleaning and disinfection.

For additional information, call the APHIS Pseudorabies Hotline at (800) 601-9327 or visit the APHIS homepage at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

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